

**2010 State Damage Prevention Program Grants Progress Report**  
**Funding Opportunity Number: DTPH56-10-SN-0001**  
**CFDA Number: 20.720**

**Award Number:** DTPH56-10-G-PHPS07  
**Project Title:** Maine Public Utilities State Damage Prevention  
**Date Submitted:** August 30, 2010  
**Submitted by:** Amy Spelke

**Specific Objective(s) of the Agreement**

Under this grant agreement, the Maine Public Utilities Commission will implement two initiatives that will enhance Maine's already progressive Damage Prevention program: 1) Facilitate a process with stakeholders designed to result in improved clarity, accuracy and effectiveness of program publications and communications, particularly with regard to notification requirements; 2) Improve field data collection, enforcement documentation, and trend data analysis through the purchase of advanced field data collection technology (hardware and software) and an online data analysis center.

**Workscope**

Under the terms of this grant agreement, the Grantee will address the following elements listed in 49 USC §60134 through the actions it has specified in its Application.

- *Element (2):* A process for fostering and ensuring the support and partnership of stakeholders, including excavators, operators, locators, designers, and local government in all phases of the program.
- *Element (8):* A process for fostering and promoting the use, by all appropriate stakeholders, of improving technologies that may enhance communications, underground pipeline locating capability, and gathering and analyzing information about the accuracy and effectiveness of locating programs.
- *Element (9):* A process for review and analysis of the effectiveness of each program element, including a means for implementing improvements identified by such program reviews.

**Accomplishments for this period**

We have made progress on both initiatives, and all three elements. With regard to the first initiative, and Element (2), the Utilities and Energy Committee of the Maine State Legislature (U&E Committee) requested that the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) consult with stakeholders affected by the "Dig Safe

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program” on how to improve the clarity, accuracy and effectiveness of the program publications and communications and clarification of the notification requirements.

The Stakeholder process, which included two face-to-face meetings and written comments, was conducted in the fall and winter of 2009-10. A report on the process was delivered to the U&E Committee in February 2010. The stakeholder process involved a discussion of and request for comment on the current written and promotional material provided by the Damage Prevention Staff at the PUC. Since then, we have planned revisions to the materials and we have just recently completed a request for proposals (RFP) process seeking bids for the production of new educational and promotional materials for the Damage Prevention Program in Maine.

We are addressing Elements (8) and (9) with a single project in the second initiative. We proposed to implement a new data collection system and corresponding database. The grant proposal was to allow the PUC enter into a service agreement with Global Relief Technologies, Inc. (GRT) to provide field data collection technology (hardware and software), enabling Maine to greatly improve its current programs designed for gathering, analyzing and sharing with stakeholders information on underground pipeline locations. This will enable Maine’s two Damage Prevention Investigators and Pipeline Safety Program Manager and other Staff members to better collect information, fully GPS-referenced and photographed, in the field and wirelessly transmit this data to a centralized, online database system. The mobile hardware serves as a time multiplier for PUC staff, facilitating the collection of standardized data which is entered a single time in the field from the device, and transmitted directly to the PUC database, rather than copied over from paper forms when time allows. All program data will also be available in the field for easy reference for the Investigators.

The project also includes the creation of an online collaboration center (web page) that updates and modernizes PUC’s myriad databases of information, which are currently maintained across multiple formats, such as Excel, Access and hard-copy/paper files. By merging these databases into a single online collaboration center, and with the addition of field-collected and verified data, the GRT solution will be a substantial improvement for the PUC to better collect, analyze and share up-to-date information with stakeholders through the use of technology. The system creates GIS maps based on data collected in the field, as well as allows for the exporting of single records and user-created reports that are typically required by stakeholders and legislative/oversight panels.

Through the use of this technology, the PUC will be in a better position to evaluate the work of Damage Prevention Investigators and excavators and operators and to better share information with stakeholders. The time savings will greatly improve the efficiency of the PUC’s overall program and assist the

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PUC with better managing aspects of the program such as stakeholder reporting, inspection/verification of worksites, and providing informational reports back to stakeholders and to legislative/oversight panels. This upgraded data management and analysis capability will be utilized to review and analyze the effectiveness of each program element as well as allow for more targeted enforcement and education activities.

Because the PUC does not have its own Information Technology (IT) department (it relies on the State of Maine's Office of IT (OIT) as do all other Maine state agencies), the implementation of this solution had to be coordinated through Maine's OIT. In February, after the awards were announced, we began meeting with OIT to plan the implementation. At that time, it was determined that before we could enter into a contract with GRT (the planned vendor) we had to complete an internal IT process, which included designing the database. Through this process it will be determined whether the project will be kept "in house" or contracted out. Either way, the concept of the initiative and the overall design will remain the same. The hardware and software is yet to be determined. We have had extensive database design session and the IT department is researching handheld equipment options.

### **Quantifiable Metrics/Measures of Effectiveness**

This grant supports two distinct projects: new educational/outreach material and a new data storage/collection system. Neither lends itself to specific metrics.

Through developing the educational/outreach material, the program has had increased contact with many stakeholders (many of Maine's large and small utilities, the One Call System (Dig Safe Inc.), locators, and excavators). This alone is a positive outcome. In addition, we have planned updates to our literature and web pages. This not only improves education but, because we used the insight from stakeholders, reassures our constituents that the program is listening to their concerns.

The reason for implementing a new database and data collection process is to improve our ability to measure the effectiveness of the program.

### **Issues, Problems or Challenges**

Though the implementation of the database/handheld devices has been delayed due to Maine State IT processes and policies, the project is still on schedule to complete this calendar year.

There are no issues with the printed and electronic material.

### **Mid-term Financial Status Report**

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The mid-term financial report has been sent as a separate attachment to the AA.

### **Plans for Next Period**

We plan to complete the printing of the new promotional material and implement a database and data collection application.

### **Requests of the AOTR and/or PHMSA**

No actions requested at this time.